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**COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION
FOR A BETTER SERVICE**

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Communication and Cooperation for a better Service

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Guests of this Workshop,

I want to thank the organisers of this Workshop for granting me the possibility to share my thoughts concerning this topic with you for about 20 minutes.

As an exception I will do this without power point presentation and without the equipment generally used for conferences and I have decided to just simply present some ideas.

As a member of the Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying (BEV) I have dealt with the development and implementation of new processes and methods mostly for the processing and distribution of information of the BEV for many years. In doing so I had to talk to the colleagues of our house to prepare the grounds for the acceptance of the new ways. I had to find out about the expectations and wishes of our customers and how content they were with what we could offer. But I also had to find ways to make it possible for the BEV to walk for a while together with our partners.

Apart from technical, organisational or legal approaches to solutions, I realised one thing for sure; even though we have one common language, it is often impossible to claim that we speak the same language, when we talk about the same things. This holds true for single terms - for example the term "parcel"- as well as for the definition of common aims. So just take the definition of parcel of the cadastre and compare it to the one of the European agrarian support, for example.

In this room there are - I assume - technicians and lawyers - this reminds me of an experience I made a few years ago during a workshop with technicians and lawyers.

We were then working in groups, that were mainly divided according to their profession. In the technician group each participant had a lot of papers filled with sketches in front of him and the flip-chart was covered with arrows and diagrams and arcs. An accidental look into the conference room of the lawyers showed a virgin flip chart, no writing, no diagrams and no arcs.

Then I thought that this was coincidence, in the course of time I found out that this kind of communication obviously is specific professions.

Austria is an alpine region.

As much as valleys and landscapes form people, professions and professional training do form our ways of communicating.

And that in front of the background of the linguistic terms of which Werner Heisenberg in his treatise "Physics and Philosophy" said already in 1962:

"... that every word and every term, as clear as it may seem to us, only has a restricted area of application".

Karl Kraus, the famous Austrian critic for the German speaking countries at the beginning of the 20th century, made it clearer, by saying: " What separates the Austrians from the Germans is their common language."

When we communicate - and our means of communication mainly is the spoken language - we should be aware that even when we raise an issue, we can only reach an approximation to what we want to be understood. And that a lot of ways of approximation are possible and most probably also necessary to get together.

Within the frame of the discussion about "Spatial Data Infrastructure" in Austria we use the term "Geobasisdaten" for the data of the BEV. In the European discussions you find the terms base data as well as core data, essential data or reference data.

Among the National Mapping Agencies there seems to have been reached a consensus concerning these terms. But even that took years.

We here in Austria have discussed the question of "Geodatenpolitik" - here we have again a term that actually means "Spatial Data Infrastructure" - together with the regional administrations (Austria consists of 9 federal provinces) for nearly one year and also there a lot of time was needed to clearly define well-known and obvious terms. In Europe and for Europe there are a lot of organisations that, in different constellations, but also often with nearly the same persons, discuss geodetic, geographic and spatial questions.

Not so long ago a group of experts invited by Spain, that was chairing the EC at that time, was in Spain discussing the cadastre. Primarily with the aim to pass a cadastre declaration and to establish a Permanent Cadastre Committee for Europe with the aim to effectively represent the cadastre in front of the EC.

I, too, am of the opinion that aims, abilities, possibilities and necessities of the cadastre should be explained to the responsible politicians. But I consider the cadastre to be only a part - even though an important one - of land administration or if you like - part of the base data or reference data - within the frame of the spatial data infrastructure.

I am of the opinion that with specialised fragmentation into - though undoubted important - single pieces and a subsequent separated pursuit of single questions, the aim can't be reached. We have to form clusters to represent our interests, clusters that combine the different branches of our geo-activities. It should be the aim of cluster to provide each member or partner with the best information possible, to promote the image of the members and to put them into a better position, but also to strengthen the cooperation among the participants. This above all bearing in mind that cooperation in the sector of geo-data and geo-information means cooperation with politics and between public and private sector.

Now lets return to cadastre and geo-data.

The cadastre itself is no all-inclusive set of geo-data. Geo-data can never provide a complete and definite description of the reality. They will always only be an approximation to real nature. To say it straight forward, we do not deal with the truth, but with the limited and approximated description of reality. Let us face the facts, that all we can reach are mere approximations. Lets face the facts, but not only when we are looking at geo-data themselves, lets face the facts also and above all for the cooperation with others and in perusing the aims vis-à-vis the political responsible persons, be it in our own home-country or in an united Europe. And in the discussion I mentioned concerning the representation of the interests of the cadastre, the cadastre is in front of this background only an approximation to the best possible approximation. Groups of geo-data are groups of single elements, describing the reality surrounding us.

What can make us successful is the fact, that approximations, as described, are possible at all. If you are content with this "best possible" approximation, one can thus describe chosen groups of elements, knowing that one neglects less relevant phenomena. Without disregarding future developments, when looking at the present.

For the "Spatial Information for Europe" this means, to find the important elements and to push them.

To point out to the policy the difference between having and not having such an "infrastructure" and that in a language comprehensible to policy in front of the background of common interests with one voice. Common interests also in the questions of the conference concerning Partnerships - Public-Public / Public-Private.

At the moment all European countries are examining national functions in accordance with aspects of business and national economics.

In some countries this lead to the formation of "Geo-Societies", that were formed by outsourcing former public authorities. They are at least partly state-owned, even though they are a legal entity. Such a measure changes the prerequisites for a cooperation, but also the prerequisites for work itself. A look across the borders and into the affected professions shows that clearly.

New ways of cooperation between administration and enterprises are possible today mostly owing to the application of the new technologies. Some create new things. Many do a lot. Some do again what has already been done by others. Often you find competition and rivalry, where cooperation and endorsement would be useful, advisable and economic. Where competition would be welcome, there is a common retreat into protected areas.

One does sometimes get the impression that new technologies of data processing and transfer don't just go hand in hand with a quicker and better access to data or do reduce costs. One gets the impression that many use the possibilities of the new technology, when they exist already somewhere else.

Technology pushes solutions and economic or also technical sense are secondary.

This holds true for all three P/S
Public Public and Public Private Partnerships .

Partnerships make sense, when the respective better abilities and possibilities of the one partner add to those of the other partner. Or also, if the one partner takes over the tasks he is better at. Partnership does not develop, if both do or want to do the same. Technical partnership also implies comparable, well-founded, technical education.

I see one of the challenges of the future in the creation of such an education and to promote vocational training with respect to future cooperation.

Facing tasks that comprise more than geo-documentation and geo-economy of an organisation or a single country, bigger than the present Europe of 15 and the knowledge, that outside of the world of the experts there are still citizens and customers.

So lets

- react flexibly and quickly to the situation that we are in,
- make use of the still favourable circumstances,
- try to make sense of the ambiguous and contradictory messages,
- realise the relative importance of the different elements,
- try to find the similarities and the common things in spite of separating differences,
- have novel ideas,
- be successful,
- not forget the customer.

That are my wishes for your workshop.